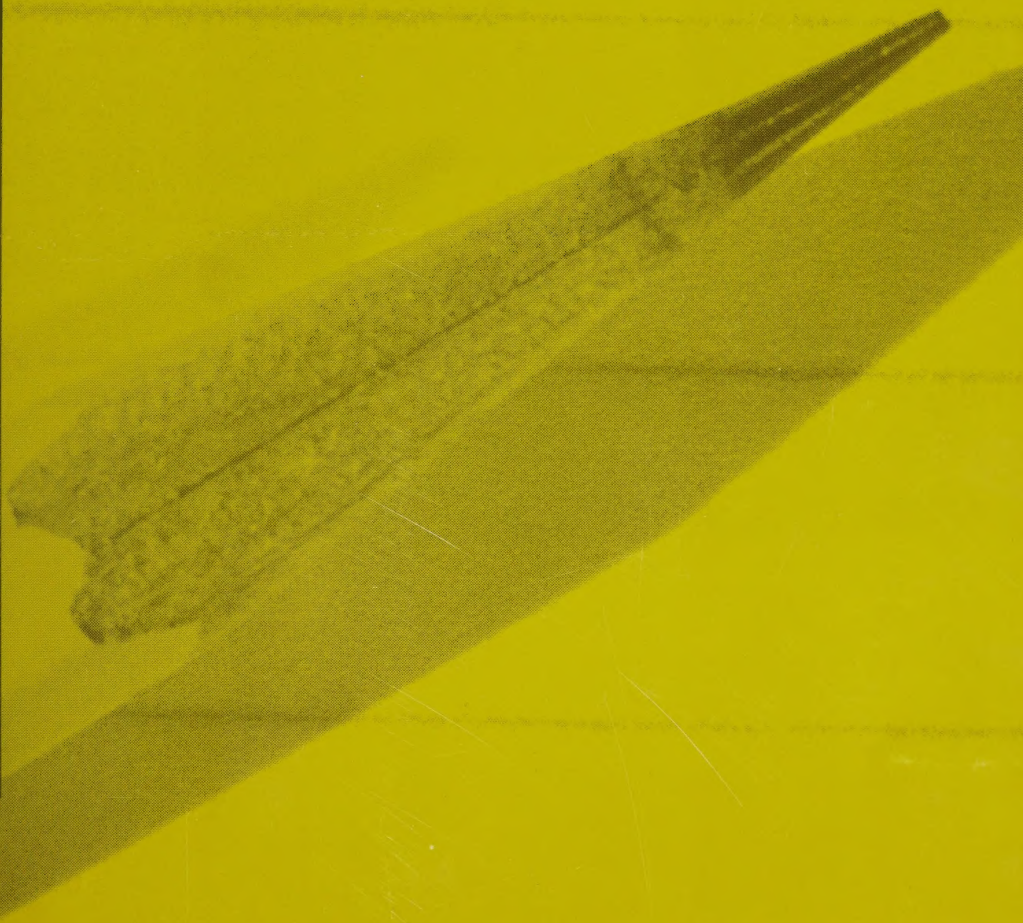


PERISVI

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A
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2000
2001



PRISM

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Special feature by author Jill McCorkle.

spring
2001

MY PERSONAL SOUNDTRACK

by Jill McCorkle

One of my favorite memories is of my parents slow dancing in our pale green livingroom, their feet rocking back and forth on a worn braided rug, a 45 of Ray Charles's "I Can't Stop Loving You" spinning on our portable stereo. My sister and I, in flannel gowns, stood behind the louvered door of the kitchen and peeked in. I felt embarrassed and happy. I watched the logo of that 45, a rainbow colored cobra, turn and turn and turn. I felt that I would have my parents that way forever and even now when I hear Ray singing, I do. The arm was raised so that it played again and again, and this is the part of the memory I love best — the raised arm — the promise that the needle would lift, pause and then return to the comfortable groove to begin again.

My earliest memories of 45s feature the little tan box my parents kept beside the small brown hifi that preceded the stereo. I loved to slip the discs from their sleeves. I loved the shape and the feel of the records, the gospel selections where the vinyl came in beautiful shades of red and blue and looked like stained glass when held up to the light. And the sounds: my earliest faves being "Abba Dabba Honeymoon" and "Chattanooga Choo Choo," Elvis's "Hound Dog" with the flipside "Don't Be Cruel."

We had a babysitter who rolled back that braided rug, turned on the music and danced with my sister and me all afternoon. We had a cat with a broken leg who slid back and forth on his little cast while we twisted and jumped around. Our babysitter was about our mother's age, midthirties, and was very tall and skinny. She once ordered a false fanny to enhance her shape but we never saw her wear it. It would have interfered with her mastery of the limbo, her long limber legs bowing and strutting to whatever music we played. Some days she brought her son who was my age and it got whispered about the neighborhood that I had a black boyfriend. I didn't care. My sister didn't care and our sitter surely didn't care. She had been told that her top priority was that we have fun and be happy while my mother was at work. And we were. We danced all afternoon and then promptly at five o'clock, she made us take a bath, put on our pjs and eat a big bowl of grits. That routine — the dancing, the hot soapy water, and the bowl of thick warm starch and butter — was better than any sleep sedative you might find on the

market. We were spent. To this day I associate good music with a warm full satisfied feeling.

I was in Kindergarten (my sister in fourth grade) when the Beatles made their debut on the Ed Sullivan show and my parents let us sit up to watch. My sister and I were both bumpers; you know, we'd sit and bump our backs against the back of whatever we were sitting on: chair or sofa or carseat. Who knows what psychological explanation this might have (we also rocked back and forth in our beds at night while my sister sang whatever she had learned at school, most often Burl Ives songs)? It could just be that we had rhythm and that the grownups in our life had nurtured and stoked that rhythm to a point that we could NOT sit still if there was music traveling through the air and into our limbs. We bumped a backseat right out of the Chevy II wagon and my sister had as an infant rocked the legs right off of her crib. Rock and Roll had touched us and we would never be the same.

We sang the lyrics of "I Want to Hold Your Hand" while the 45 played. I learned to scream real loud and cross my eyes and make funny faces like Ringo. Jan actually learned to sing. We bumped and rocked and sang together but really — for me at any rate — it was the beginning of a very active fantasy life where I was featured prominently on stages under bright hot lights or where I was the proud owner of a horse just like Trigger and a couple of dozen dogs of varying sizes and shapes. The fantasies — like fiction — seemed so real to me that I look back on them now and feel as if I really did at one time look just like Twiggy with long fake eyelashes and crushed vinyl boots and matching motorcycle chick cap.

The first 45 I ever bought with my own money was (I found) "Love on a Two Way Street" (and lost it on a lonely highway) and I can remember sitting and listening to it over and over again. It made me feel alienated and melancholy, which I enjoyed tremendously. It was around the same time I got my first album, "Hold On" by Herman's Hermits. I had a big crush on Peter Noone and fantasized that I would one day meet him and that I would look just like Shelley Fabares (singer of "Johnny Angel" and quite a few movie duets with Elvis). It was during this same period of time that I slept each and every night with a transistor under my pillow. The farthest place I could reach was WOWO Fort Wayne Indiana and I listened faith-



fully.

I find it impossible to remember what year this or that happened. For me if I think Sixth grade, instead of a year, I immediately think that “Na Na Hey Hey Kiss Him Good-Bye” was a hit. I hear a chorus of girls singing Michael Jackson’s “I’ll Be There” in the dilapidated bathroom at the Joe P. Moore middle school, a red brick building that had been standing when my parents were growing up. It was the first year of integration and so that song brings it all back — black and white hands reaching for the grimy green soap and brown paper towels, black and white hands wetting down toilet paper and together throwing the soggy mess up to stick on the old ceiling. I see coats thrown over the huge metal radiator that bumped and whistled along with the music. I smell steam heat and Bonnie Bell lip gloss and AfroSheen. And this was where our real education took place, new fangled racial debutantes coming into our own with the help of the Jackson Five and the Supremes, songs like “Love Child” and “ABC”.

When I hear Tommy James and the Shondells (my own personal favorites being “Crimson and Clover” and “Crystal Blue Persuasion”), I feel the pull of first love. The boy I loved could kill flies with a rubber band and once gave me a friendship ring at the highschool basketball game. The girls wore scooter skirts and Indian Moccasins, love beads that we threaded ourselves when the teachers weren’t looking and strips of rawhide, tied and knotted around our wrists and ankles. “Crystal Blue Persuasion” conjures for me a sunny spot near a drainage ditch in the cemetery where a friend and I had ridden our bikes and practiced smoking cigarettes until we got dizzy. We lay there sprawled in the sunshine and we named this particular spot after the two boys we loved — some combination of their names preceded by Rio which we thought sounded romantic. Afterwards we rode our bikes back to her house and listened to Tommy James and the Shondells over and over. Her older sister also told us many stories about Jim Morrison and the prophetic impact of his lyrics. We stared at his handsome face while singing “Hello, I Love You” and marveled at the tragedy of his premature death. This serious analysis was good preparation for the next few years when we would hear the rumor that Paul McCartney was dead and we would study the cover of the Abbey Road album again and again looking for all of the

clues. (Paul was barefooted/ he had a flower in his lapel, etc.)


I hear Janis Joplin's "Cry Baby" or Jimi's "Purple Haze" or the Beatles singing "Back in the USSR" and I want to smoke cigarettes in someone's garage in the blacklight glow of fluorescent posters. I want to slip into some hip hugger bell bottoms with a double notched leather belt, puckered crepe shirt, and Dr. Scholl's sandals, shoe of all shoes, wear them, use one as hammer, use one as a weapon. I want to move.

I went to hear Steppenwolf in Fayetteville, North Carolina with my next door neighbor, a boy who just a couple of years earlier had successfully learned to pin me in the neighborhood wrestling matches and all else failing could sucker punch me. I no longer held the wrestling title. Mothers felt that girls with breasts (even nonexistent ones) should not play tackle football or wrestle with a bunch of boys. So what was a girl to do? Alas, you dated them.

And there went much of my neighborhood clout. I accepted the date and his sister's boyfriend drove all of a hundred feet (my friend couldn't drive) so he could walk up to my door to get me while all the little snot faced wrestlers in training sat on the curb and laughed at this spectacle which was me and my neighbor/ friend/date as we both walked out in red, white and blue bell bottoms. I recently figured this is what explains the Tommy Hilfiger block I have. I see the flag and red white and blue in any form and I feel humiliated; I long for the subtlety of the faded boys straight legged Levis I normally wore and a simple Hang Ten tee shirt. But there we were in the Fayetteville coliseum, my chest pounding with every pulsing beat of "Magic Carpet Ride" and "Born to Be Wild." I was in the eighth grade – he was ninth – and I felt wild and powerful. I felt completely cool and invincible until it was all over and we brushed cheeks and lips at my front door, both of us knowing somehow that we would have been much more comfortable taking each other in a head lock.

And how is it that there are strains of music (the Hoover vacuum cleaner ad, for example) that have the power to move me to tears. (Not, however, to vacuum). The old Coke ads do it; they make me feel homesick. The music to "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" and the original Bob Newhart and "All in the Family" make





me feel I should be sitting in the tiny pine paneled den of my childhood, my hair smelling of Prell, my big black dog stretched out at my feet, the old gray stereo still in the same spot in the living room, though the braided rug had finally been replaced with wall to wall carpet, the pale green walls a cheerful yellow.

That stereo traveled with me until I was in my twenties, playing all the old scratched albums that had survived high school parties and college and sandy vacations at the beach, the collection of 45s that I still carry around: Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs "May I" and Van Morrison's "Brown Eyed Girl." There are days when I crave Aretha (she makes me feel so strong) and Marvin (makes me feel so good) and the Doors (make me feel so young). By the time I parted with that stereo, one speaker was completely dead — a friend dubbed it the sterei — and I advanced to a real turntable which little did I know was close to extinction. The last time my husband and I bought a needle it was at a store called "Needle in the haystack."

And yes, for everyone who mourns the LP there are two or three to argue the merits of the CD, especially those who have ever had albums as neglected and over played and touched as mine. I miss sitting on the floor with vinyl spread around me: 45s with their little plastic doohickeys to fit in the center, LPs slipped from their sleeves and carefully blown free of dust. But what I miss more than anything is that wonderful pause. Needle lifts, returns, settles, and then depending on the power of the arm clicks to rest or rises and returns to begin anew. The pause is an important part of the personal soundtrack. The pause is scratchy and lengthy and filled with anticipation. And, as in life, that is often the very best part.

LE VISAGE D'UN HOMME

Why you need to have one,
the world may not know.
But I have traveled far and wide, finding nothing
in comparison.

His eyes and nose are far more than a rose.
His lips are in tune with the waves of the waters.

They rock gently as he speaks.
A lover is lost in them and finds comfort in their curves.

He truly walks in clever form, his visage in the air
and his nose in the clouds.

His face peers at a rose and squints with ambivalence.
Unlike the face, the reds, the whites, the yellows adorn
every taste.

Le visage d'un homme is only one shade: a true envy.

by Malinda Bledsoe

HEARING CORN GROW

Corn growing under a star-clad Oklahoma

sky:

Night noises interrupted by
the faint stretching of husks.

A sound more quiet than the breeze -

The corn aging, expanding its jacket

slowly,

Like dew creeping upon the dawn.

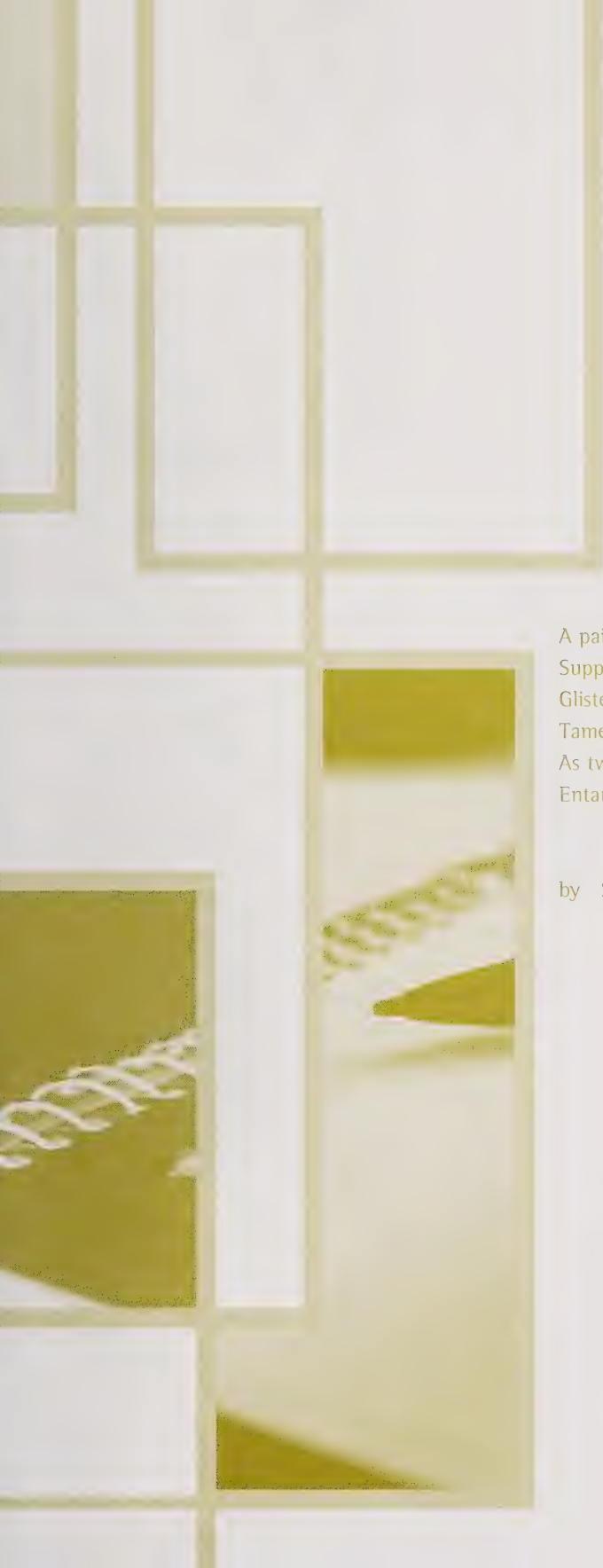
Corn growing with a quiet grace
more gentle than a butterfly's flutter.

by Erin Mahaffey

Winner of the Penny poetry award




HAAMIOCK BREEZE



A pair of trees
Support mazed threads;
Glistening rays
Tame unseen gills
As twisted coils
Entangle swaying bodies.

by Stacy Johnson

LAST WORDS



What can you say to someone,
Someone you loved and broke your heart?
Thank you.
Thank you for allowing me to open myself up
And allowing me to experience satisfaction.
Thank you for giving me the strength,
The strength to be weak.
Thank you for making me feel loved and beautiful
And at times even invincible.
Thank you for showing me that love really does exist
In a world that is often unkind,
Even if it didn't last.
Thank you for letting me know
That even if it means you'll hurt one day
The memories you'll have make it all worthwhile.

by Amy Minges

IF I WANTED TO DIE

If I wanted to die would you kill me?
If I wanted to fly would you give me wings?
You're always handing me a knife, but you
never encourage me to
soar.

Would you rather me die than be happy?
Would you rather kill all my joy than watch
me smile?
Would you hold me back because you couldn't
succeed?
If I wanted to run would you let me go?

Not if running made me happy.
How can I not care -
I try so hard to ignore it all.
Each time my temper blazes or my eyes fill
with tears,
it's a victory for you.

How can I alone defeat a nation of
adversaries?

by Kelly Anne Mahaffey



IDLE THOUGHTS

by Audrey Warrenfeltz



Your childhood is a fragile thing. At least that's what most psychologists would say. But those of us who can remember the magic of being a child know better. We were able to leap with reckless abandon into bodies of water that were less than a foot deep, not knowing what lay beneath their murky surfaces. We were the ones who thought that, like Mary Poppins, we too could float off the roof by opening an umbrella. When we fell to the ground and broke our arms it was because the umbrella was broken, not because the laws of gravity were aligned against us.

I thought that I was a superhero back then, a changeling dropped onto my parents' doorstep by elves that sheltered in trees. I would actually try to outrun cars. Waiting at the corner of a city block, I would give a car a head start before tearing down the sidewalk after it. My naked feet barely grazed the cement, as I seemed to fly past driveways. I always beat the car to my house, something I felt proved my unusual birth. Now as I look back on it, I can rationalize that the cars were going less than five miles an hour: the mystery of my triumph lost in the knowledge that age brings. The one place that logic and reason couldn't touch, and still can't, was in my dreams. There I could do and be anyone. I could fly above the treetops feeling the cool winds against my face or I could be a beautiful woman able to save children from all things evil. Sometimes I could even "channel surf" through my dreams, choosing the one I wanted to stay with, eliminating the nightmares almost completely. My greatest feat was to continue a dream, see it to what I felt was the end, instead of allowing my subconscious to do so. I never stopped to wonder how I could remember a dream when I was still in the middle of it. I just used it to control my dream, to help other characters and me when we became trapped in a nightmare.


I don't know when dreams became so important to me; it just seemed as though they always were. Even now I find myself waiting for the day to end so that I can go to sleep and dream . . . the scent of scorched earth filled the air as the shuttle landed. Morgan pressed closer to the chain-linked fence to get a better look at the new arrivals who were already beginning to descend to the landing pad. They were among the first of the Exiled to return since the treaty had been signed. Morgan had never before laid eyes upon a member of their species before. She had been an infant during the purge, too young to remember the people who had once lived among her

own. There was a sense of comfort about her when she looked upon them now, something familiar and warm.

Their faces were more pointed, almost birdlike, and there was something about the eyes. Other than that she could see nothing that would mark them as different, really. She wondered what they were like, what their culture contained that would cause her people to force them to scatter among the stars. Her people were known throughout the galaxy for their technological advances. It was something they were proud of, which is why they signed the treaty with the Exiles. Their pride was tainted with the shame of their actions in the past. The purge was something that most of her people hadn't wanted and so they were ashamed that they had allowed it to last so long. The only information that Morgan could gather about them came from old broadcasts from space stations. She recorded them from the memory banks of the shuttles she helped her brother repair. It was almost a hobby to gather the little blurbs that appeared in the computers. Most often the broadcasts were about their location, something she found irrelevant since she was stationary. Recently, though, she came across a digital broadcast that referred to the Exiles as the Avis. When she looked the word up in her translator she was surprised to discover it was an old Earth term for "bird." She had often wondered why they called themselves that. Now looking at them, she understood it was their physical attributes that had secured the name for them.

While she had been examining them, they in turn had been examining her. She was startled to discover that several of the new arrivals were staring at her from the other side of the fence. Blinking her eyes rapidly, she wondered how long they had been watching her. She could feel her face redden under their stony scrutiny. Morgan understood that they were exhibiting their irritation at being treated like animals on display. Two of the three turned and moved on; the third, however, continued to stare at her. She couldn't contain her curiosity and found herself staring back at him. He was distinctly different from the others she had seen. His features were less pronounced, and his eyebrows were thinner and more arched than the others had been. Raising her eyes to meet his one last time, she turned and walked back to the garage.





She could still feel his eyes on her as she furthered the distance between them. After entering the deeply shadowed garage and slipping from view, he too turned and followed the others to the awaiting transport. Releasing the breath she hadn't known she'd been holding, Morgan lifted her eyes to the mirror that hung behind the door. Her hand lightly stroked her long braid that fell over one shoulder, curling at the end just under her breast. She wondered what he had thought of her red hair - it was a color she had not seen on any of his people. Her eyes were distinct as well; she had inherited the deep green from an Irishman somewhere on her father's side. He had been the first to settle this planet after Earth had become too crowded. Her features were a symbol of her status on the planet - only her family had hair as deeply red. A smile graced her face as she wondered if she would see this strange Avis again. Her face was flushed and her heart pounding from her excitement as she turned back to the the transport she was supposed to have been repairing. . .

Every morning when I wake up, I fight to stay in bed a little longer, hoping to retain as much of my dream as I can. I'll use any excuse to stay wrapped in the comfort of my cool sheets and soft pillows, any excuse to hold on to the memory of the dream that transported me away from my life as a college student, a drone in a collective of adult minds with no imagination and little use for flights of fancy. Every morning I try to discover how I would continue my dreams as a child, a secret I seem to have forgotten. Was it the position I awoke in? The last thing I was thinking about that night? Or was it simply my innocence which allowed me to live a lifetime in a few minutes of R.E.M.? I may never find out, but I'll keep dreaming, hoping one day to unlock the secret that, as a child, I knew.

I WANT YOU TO WRITHE

I want you to writhe
burn
I will be your passion
your poetry
your muse
your pain
your music
I will be your newest and greatest tragedy
Your fatal love
it will be me that you play
and bleed on the piano keys
I will be the fifth wound to your christ
your sin
your savior
salvation & damnation
wrapped into one lovely package

by Johanna Stevens



WATERCOLORS

Sinking into the soft land of dreamscape,
Colors merge and melt together as one...
Until only the sharp hues of emotion can separate them.
I float, I swim, I soar upon the fiery visions of the sun.
The rhythms of time become mute,
Making singular existence pointless.

by Rhiannon Minor

A DREAM

A dream is a thought
that came from a wish;
a wish is a desire that came from a want;
a want can't be fulfilled without skill;
a skill takes preparation and time;
time is something we all possess;
if you possess something that will help them pass it along
when you pass it along show consideration;
consideration is needed to prove you care;
care doesn't have to cost money;
money is the root of all evil;
evil can be masked with ease.
If you do it with ease you don't learn a lesson;
a lesson learned now saves preparation;
preparation prevents procrastination;
procrastination keeps you from getting what you want.
if you don't know what you want you can't make a wish.
if you don't make a wish, don't give it a thought .
if you give it a thought then make it your dream.

by Christin Wilson

A POEM



I try to think
Of a poem for you.
No words remain.
I see your sweet face,
I hear your kind words.
Still. . .
No poem for you.
I wrack my brain
And wonder why.
Visions inside my head,
And, yet, my pen is dead.
A poem for you,
A poem for me.
Maybe a poem can't just be.
It must reflect,
It must bestow.
It must have grace
That grows, and grows.
Where is my poem?
I must find it.
Sitting on my paper.
As I look for it.

by Jennifer Hull

Jared had been in possession of - burdened with, he sometimes thought - the ring for three weeks. He had been waiting for just the right time to ask; he knew he wanted it to be story-book special. He sat now in the center of the bed they shared, sure that tonight was the night.

"This is so perfect," he thought. "Anna got her big promotion, and I'm done paying for this thing." He patted his pocket and smiled easily. He had ordered dinner from Dragon Garden. He knew she liked her life simple and their lo mein was her favorite. They had shared three years worth of late night dinners from that little-hole-in-the-wall restaurant.

Anna was probably on her way home from the law office she sometimes called her other home. Today she had learned the results of her review and she had called Jared with the good news.

"Guess what?"

"You got it? You got it!"

"Yes! You're speaking with the newest Associate of Jones and Stanton," she said.

"Congratulations, darling. I'm proud of you," he said.

"Thanks, hon. I had better go. Got to be all responsible and stuff." She hung up.

It had been her voice that had first drawn his attention that night of rehearsal. A music major, he always had an ear for a voice that worked with whatever he was writing in his mind. He was composing the music for a production that year at State, and he had not yet cast the female lead. Anna was there prepping a friend for her audition when he heard her laugh. Tiny brooks ran green with envy at the sound.

Now he had heard that voice stretch and say things he could have only dreamed of then. In his career in professional voice lessons he had yet to come across anyone with that sort of natural pitch. His one in a million - Anna.

She is just leaving the office now, he thought. Hair down, her voice nearly drowned out by the outrageously-loud radio, she's singing. He knew that pose well, one she assumed anytime he got too quiet on a road trip and she felt the need to liven things up, or simply to express her happiness.

by Johanna Stevens

He walked to the kitchen, hummed an imaginary tune, washed his hands again, and smiled down as the cool water passed over them. The ghosts of kitchen memories began to sing: cooking breakfast in the afternoon, dancing in the cramped rectangular kitchen, making love while the bread baked, arguing as their voices reverberated against the corners of that little room. He knew them all well, ached for more.

Anna burst into the apartment dancing, still singing to the song on the radio: "... You can't always get what you want, you can't always get what you want, but if you try sometimes, you just might find, you get what you need."

He entered the living room, eyes wide as quarters, smiling at her. Anna turned and posed like a little girl in a new dress, sporting a grin as big as Texas. He crossed the room quickly and lifted her into a spinning loop, whispering in her ear: "You deserve it all, Anna."

She laughed as they spun, her flaming autumn hair tripping behind their circle, that laugh warming the room. It was then that Jared tripped on her brace, and they tumbled down into a giggling heap.

"Good grief, who knew I was going to come home to this abuse," she said.

"I'll make it up to you tonight, I promise."

"Is that what I think it is?" she asked.

His breath caught in his throat: how in the world could he have given it away after all this time?

She tilted the air over his head. "Dragon Garden. I knew it. You sweet boy." With that she kissed the top of his forehead and set off for the kitchen, kicking off her shoes as she went.

He found her, nose-first, in the carton of crab rangoon.

"Must be some sort of special occasion. The expensive stuff," she said.

"Yeah, just a little one," he grinned. "Eat and change first, silly."

He led him to the food and his fears. This is what I want most, he told himself again. She loves me. She wants this, too. I mean, we've talked about it, and she loves surprises. She reentered the small kitchen in her favorite jeans and blue tank top.

"Ready yet?" she said.



"I think so. Let's eat."

Later, when they had finished and had begun the dishes, he was looking at her with all of his heart. She washed, he dried. But when she went to hand him the next plate, he was on his left knee staring up at her.

"What are you doing? Come on, we need to do these before the show starts, or else I'll never get this soy sauce off the bowls," she scolded.

Jared stayed where he was and took her left hand, still soaking and sudsy, and brought it to his lips.

"Quit now, this isn't funny."

"You're right, it isn't. This is a moment I have been waiting for since I first knew I loved you, that first night when you laughed and stole my heart."

The dish she had been holding in her other hand fell and shattered as her mouth dropped open, but he continued.

"I have loved you faithfully for three years, and know with all of my heart that you love me, and I want to be married. I want you to do me the honor of becoming my bride," he said. The words had tumbled out much more quickly than he had expected and now there was just silence between them. He watched her, waiting for all the imagined responses which had become a part of him.

"What?"

He smiled up at her, still on bended knee.

"What. . . What are you talking about?" she said down to him. She looked far away.

"I think you know," he said. This was not one of the responses he'd imagined, one where the music soared and passionate kisses were exchanged. He was dizzy.

She had pulled back her hand and was squatting to pick up the pieces of broken plate. After throwing the fragments away, she turned toward the sink.

His alarm was growing by the second. He stood slowly, grasped her by the shoulders, and turned her back toward him.


"Well?"

She looked at him through a veil of red hair.

"Well, what?"

"Well, what are thinking?" This wasn't even in the same movie store as the final scene of his imagined proposals.

"What am I thinking? I'm thinking that you



Winner of the Elizabeth
Gibson Taylor Prose Award

must be kidding me, that this is some kind of stupid joke." She looked at him evenly, waiting for a response.

He thought for a moment, stumped. "No, it isn't a joke. I love you, and last time I checked you loved me. We're happy. I thought we would get married, really start our lives together."

She moved suddenly and stood near the stove. He went after her and waited, hands at his sides, the dish towel slung haphazardly on the sink.

"Is that so wrong?" he asked.

She waited a beat to answer him, first turning toward him. "No, it isn't wrong, but I don't think we need rings or vows to begin our lives together, and I just don't think that we're ready for marriage." Her hands were locked together in a self-handshake.

"Not ready?" he repeated as though the thought had never crossed his mind, and indeed it hadn't. "No, I can't believe that, after three years, there's any way we are going to get more ready."

"Is this about time? Some sort of expiration date? What, if we don't get married within a certain period of time, the love goes sour?"

Well, that's what it sounds like right now, doesn't it?" he said

She laughed, a biting sour taste now. "So, let's hurry and go get married, because that will fix all our problems."

He remembered then that he had never even unpocketed the ring. It weighed heavily in his pocket now, so he drew it out and stared at it.

"I just want to get married."

She let the breath go out of her as his last words traveled through her, and she watched him there with the ring.

"I'm not sure I do," she said.

He stood there a moment more, staring at her through the little circle with longing, and then he placed the ring on the dish towel. He went to the bedroom and put on his shoes, mechanically. He crossed to the front door and walked out, around the corner, and down the way, his memories and her voice as his companions.

She stayed in the same place in the kitchen until she heard the door close. Then she leaned over and stared at the sink. There were no ghosts in that space with her, just a silent kitchen and a ring on a dirty dish towel.

SHE DREAMS OF RAINBOWS

She dreams of rainbows,
Sitting on a green slice of salvation a thousand miles away,
Nestled between the scorching heat of asphalt and
the chill texture of concrete.

The music in her ears transcends
the din of human existence screaming for attention.
Colorful spectrums hang translucently upon the thin air.
The Soft whimsical forms of clouds explode and shift in slow motion.
A gentle breeze blows tiny kisses,
Tenderly touching the fine tendrils of her hair.

Her peace surrounds her like a warm blanket,
Untouchable to those who would steal a novelty not their own.
Though her form is motionless, her spirit moves in leaps and bounds,
Conveying the unspoken knowledge;

That the dance of nature,
The art of movement,
And the song of her life,

Is all the poetry she will ever need.

by Rhiannon Minor

CRYSTALLINE COBWEBS

crystalline cobwebs
apocalyptic day dreamer
sitting pretty, little lies
tracing the lines of humanity and insanity of feigned emotion.

Snake to circle, circle to snake
endless round, like the paths my mind treads
and yet all paths lead to you, lead to your induced suffering

Into the ashram of your eyes, into the bed of your body.
You inject like a drug, intravenous intoxicant, aching in
pseudo-destruction
scouring soul and tearing memory, you twist what was,
into what you want it to be
with all your tamed tapestries and paper-doll bridesmaids.

You have become the Ken doll to my Barbie,
the blade to my wound,
and for some reason I stay, endlessly circling,
weaving reality and perception into what you want
in these weathered veins
orange horizons

dress laced with thunder whipped back like the face of a
struck child
an eye with a needle, a thief with a storm


by Johanna Stevens

A GIRLCHILD

A girlchild was born as usual
Born in a hospital, then dressed in a pink onesie.
But when her mother held her in her arms
She noticed her daughter's eyes showed no emotion.
The baby's eyes were as dark as the night and as gloomy as
An overcast day.
The mother was as alarmed as if she'd seen a ghost
From a long-past day,
And cried and prayed for her girlchild.
The girlchild's eyes watched life like a
Preying cat,
And when her mother rocked her,
She would not take a nap.
Only during thunderstorms
Did the girlchild appear alive,
Her night eyes wide and curious.
It was then the mother realized,
Her baby's spirit was different.
The mother did not tell this difference
To relatives for fear that they wouldn't understand.
They might hurt the girlchild or disown her,
Not call her their own.
When thunderstorms make the little town shake and
Floods
Make the neighborhoods swamps,
The mother knows that through the grace of God
It is her girlchild
Punishing the town for its sins.

by Dana Stanley

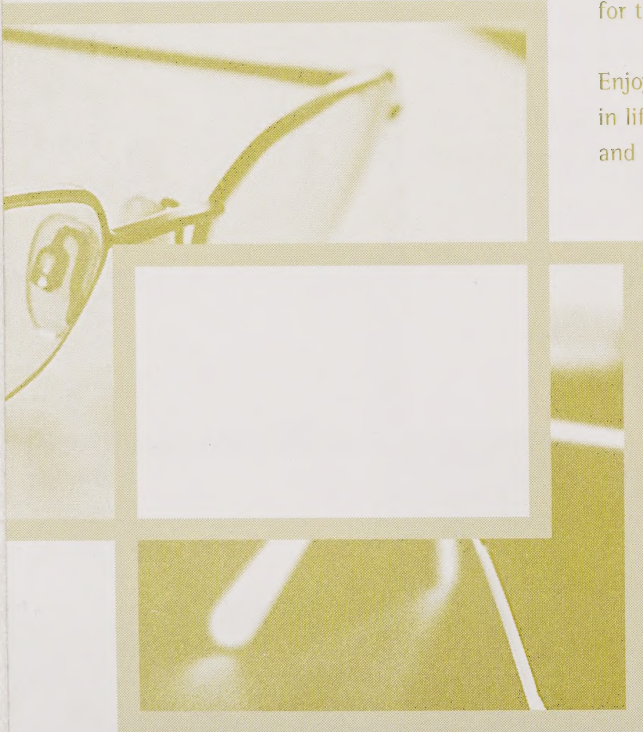
THE DANCE



Dark fire blossoms in his green eyes
as he thinks of hot summer days,
humid nights... and you.

Run to him and experience the sweetness
of all he has to whisper, and the heat
of what you want to feel.

Passion writhes between taut flesh
as you come together, embracing
for the first time... again.



Enjoy the feeling of being wrapped
in life as the music fades
and the dance ends.

by Audrey Warrenfeltz



PRISM